

6
THOUGHTS
ON
EDUCATION,

Tending chiefly

To recommend to the Attention of the
Public, some Particulars relating to that
Subject; which are not generally considered
with the Regard their Importance deserves.

By the Author of BRITAIN'S REMEMBRANCER.



L O N D O N:

Printed for G. FREER, at the *Bible* in *Bell Yard*,
Temple-Bar; and sold by M. COOPER, at the
Globe in *Fater-noster-Row*. MDCCXLVII.

2 T H O U G H T

NOTED

F

1

T
an
an
up
ju
we
In
fer
th
ev
ler
wh
da
fir

her
17
Cu
of
def
fell

THOUGHTS

ON

EDUCATION, &c.

A GAIN a second time, my dear Countrymen, a sincere well-wisher to you and all your interests presumes, on your experienced patience and good-nature, to address you.

The hour of terror and distress was hardly over, and the cloud, which had for some time hung black and gloomy over this Nation, threatening to burst upon it in a tempest of general destruction, was but just beginning to break, when a former weak but well-meant Representation was laid before you*.

In a storm at sea it is common not only for professed mariners and pilots to exert themselves for the safety of the ship, but likewise, in case of need, every private passenger thinks himself obliged to lend what assistance he can for the benefit of the whole. In the same manner, in a time of national danger, whoever has the deliverance of his country sincerely and earnestly at heart, will not so much

* The first edition of *Britain's Remembrancer*, the Piece here understood, was published in the month of *January*, 1745-6, when the Rebel-army was flying before the Duke of *Cumberland*, by whom they were totally defeated at the battle of *Culloden* the 16th day of *April* following. The chief design of the Piece was to point out the national vices and follies we were called upon by that visitation to reform.

B

consider

consider his own Qualifications for doing any thing to avert or mitigate the judgments of Heaven, as the Need there is that something be done; and will accordingly contribute his mite, and exert his abilities, such as they are. To slip an opportunity of acknowledging the candid reception given by you to what was offered on that occasion, would be both uncivil and unjust: though at the same time, To gain the *Attention* or even the most universal *Approbation* of Readers, will by no means give full satisfaction to a writer, whose aim is at something different from both, and who had rather see one person follow his advice than a thousand approve and yet neglect it. However, they, who give a friendly monitor a fair *bearing*, are more likely in time to think of taking his counsel than they who will not so much as *bear* him. That the face of affairs in this nation is altered very much for the better since the above-mentioned period, is certain. That in place of the immediate prospect of a general confusion, likely to end in the subversion of our civil and religious liberties; or in a lasting and bloody civil war, we now see Rebellion mortally wounded, and breathing its last; the sword of justice drunk with its blood, and her self tired and satiated with vengeance; the liberties of our country and the protestant religion the more firmly established for their having been shaken by the late commotions. And have we then no more to think of or to fear, or do we imagine Heaven has but *one* Judgment to punish national Wickedness or Indolence? Surely, if ever it be the duty or interest of a nation to endeavour, by a suitable conduct, to gain or keep the favour and protection of Omnipotence, it is more peculiarly so of a people favoured by so many and so signal interpositions as we have been. But alas! the happy effect, which might have been expected from our deliverance, to wit, the correcting

ing of our follies and vices, has not yet appeared clearly enough, to shew that the late visitation has done its work, so as to render a more severe and effectual one unnecessary.

But, to proceed to the Subject of the following pages : In the former Essay, among other particulars, one is mentioned, as well worthy the attention of the nation, and likely to contribute greatly to its advantage, both by its *natural* consequences, and by the probability of its drawing down a *Blessing* upon us, to wit, *The virtuous and religious Education of the Youth*. The subject could not be there fully treated on, and therefore your serious attention is desired to the following additional thoughts on a matter, which is not only in it self of the utmost importance, but which likewise seems in a peculiar manner to want a hearty recommendation to the regard of the *present* Age.

In the first place it seems hardly necessary that any Parent or Instructor of youth, who believes the Christian religion, be told, That a strict account will certainly be required, at the hands of all persons, of whatever the divine providence has committed to them ; and that, as no *Trust*, that can be committed to any person, is of equal importance with that of *immortal souls*, it is to be supposed, no neglect whatever will be so severely punished in another world as the neglect of the souls committed to the care of Parents and Instructors of youth, especially considering, That the souls of Youth are more immediately committed to the care of their Parents and Instructors than even those of a People are to their Pastor ; as persons arrived at years of discretion may be supposed (if they have had a proper education) in a great measure capable of conducting themselves ; whereas the utter *incapacity* of Youth lays them almost wholly at the mercy of their Parents or Instructors for a set of habits to regu-

late their whole conduct through life, upon which their happiness through eternity depends. And can those Parents or Instructors of youth, the number of which, it is to be feared, is not small, be said to discharge faithfully and thoroughly this awful trust, who are so far from endeavouring to form the minds of the youth under their care, and to establish them on solid and rational principles of Virtue and Religion, that many of them do not seem to think any such thing necessary to be attempted, and that a youth educated either to an *employment* by which he may gain a subsistence, or accomplish'd in the polite *arts* and *sciences* (if his birth be suitable) has had full justice done him by those to whom the charge of him was committed by providence. One would think no parent or instructor of youth, who believes that a day of accounts will come at last, should be able to think without trembling, of the terrors of it, lest the Judge should then say to such as have been negligent of the souls committed to their care, "Thou wicked and slothful servant,*
 "oughtest thou not to have improved to the ut-
 "most the opportunity put in thy hands, of being
 "useful to thy fellow-creatures, especially to those
 "immediately entrusted to thy care? How hast thou
 "shamefully *neglected* what thou might'st have
 "faithfully and worthily *performed*? How hast
 "thou, instead of being of the greatest service in
 "thy station and a blessing to numbers, proved
 "unworthy of thy place in society, and the cause
 "why numbers have come short of happiness.
 "Instead, therefore, of the *reward*, that might
 "have crowned thy labours, receive the *doom* due
 "to thy wickedness and negligence." Nor will it be agreeable to any parent or instructor of youth in that day, to hear any unhappy person, formerly under his care, reproach him in the following man-

* *Matth. xxv. 26.*

ner. " Had you faithfully and strictly discharged
 " your duty to me, I had not probably been mis-
 " rable this day. Had you warned me of the dan-
 " gers of vice and irregularity, I might have
 " escaped them. Had you laid before me the re-
 " wards of virtue and religion, I might perhaps
 " have aspired at them. Why did you, in my
 " days of youthful weakness and inexperience, keep
 " me in the dark, and suffer me to mistake my
 " way to happiness for want of a guide? How
 " could you be so cruel to one incapable of injuring
 " you? How could you neglect a work so agree-
 " able? How could you trifle with what was of so
 " much consequence to one you pretended to love?
 " Had you no ambition to lay the foundation of a
 " structure, which might have risen higher and
 " higher through eternity? Had you no zeal to be
 " found faithful in the trust committed to you?
 " Henceforth nothing remains but the cruel reflec-
 " tion on the loss of all the inexpressible joy we
 " might have given to one another, had you seen
 " me arrive at that happiness you had endeavoured
 " with success to lead me to, and had I had reason
 " to thank you for your care in pointing me the
 " way; instead of which ——— " But this is a
 subject too shocking to enlarge any farther upon.
 Let it suffice to add, at present, That as, on the
 one hand, the forming of a rational mind to virtue,
 religion, and happiness is the most glorious work
 an angel, an arch-angel, or any created Being can
 be employed in, so, in all probability, it will meet
 with the highest reward * ; on the other, as the ne-

* " They that *bring* many to righteousness shall shine as the
 " stars for ever and ever." *Dan. xii. 3.* " Whosoever shall
 " break one of these least commandments, and shall *teach* men
 " so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven," (that
 is, shall have no part in the Christian salvation) " but whoso-
 " ever shall do and *teach* them, the same shall be called *great*
 " in the kingdom of heaven."

glect

glect of an immortal soul is a breach of the most important trust that can be committed to any person, it is likely to meet with the severest punishment.

Man being a creature designed not only for a short and uncertain duration in the present state, but also for an everlasting one after this is at an end, from the hour of his entrance into the world, an existence commences, which is to go on through eternity, and therefore from that time a constant regard ought to be had, first by those to whom the care of him during his minority is committed, and afterwards by himself, to each several *Period* of his existence, and likewise to the unmeasurable and endless *Whole*. If the opinion of the most judicious be true, *viz.* That the very milk an infant sucks may have such an influence upon his passions and appetites as may affect his whole conduct through life, upon which every one knows how much his happiness through eternity depends; I say, if this opinion be just, it is plain, That nothing is indifferent or of small consequence in the education of youth, even from the earliest infancy: but that, on the contrary, things, which at first view may seem trivial, may be followed by consequences of a nature very far from trivial. I mention this particular only by the *By*, it being my design to insist chiefly on the care of youth between the age of six and eighteen, before which last period if the mind of a person be not formed to virtue and religion, it is not to be expected it ever should afterwards.

Previous to every other step, that is to be taken in the education of a young person, is the forming and breaking his temper; by cherishing and encouraging the good qualities of it, as Emulation, or a laudable desire of excelling, Curiosity, or thirst after knowledge, Humility, Tractableness, Meekness, Fearfulness of offending, and the rest; and by crush-

ing

ing and nipping in the bud the luxuriant or pernicious ones, as Anger, Pride, Resentment, Obstinacy, Sloth, Falshood, and so forth. If this work be neglected by parents till the age of Six be past, it need hardly be attempted at all: for the mind soon acquires a sturdiness and obstinacy that is not to be conquered, and bad *Habits* become quickly, as it were, a part of the very soul, and as hard to be eradicated as it would be to separate the faculties of the soul from one another. A particular that must make every wise and considerate person tremble at the thought of the consequences of suffering any other than good and virtuous *Habits* to take possession of his mind, and should make every Parent or Guardian of youth to the last degree solicitous what *Habits* first take root in the minds of those he has the charge of.

The whole of education seems to me to consist of two parts, or to come under two general heads; the first is, The accomplishing a person in such parts of knowledge as may be useful for qualifying him to pass decently and comfortably through the *present life*; the second is, The right directing him how to prepare himself for the *everlasting duration* after this life is at an end, teaching him how to improve and ennoble his nature, and putting him in the way of attaining the *favour of his Maker*, which is only another phrase for *perfect happiness*. And by how much an everlasting duration exceeds the fleeting dream of the present life, and by how much it is more fatal to be unprepared to enter upon eternity than upon the stage of this world, by so much undoubtedly it is of more consequence that Parents and Instructors of youth have a regard to the *Morals* and *Principles* of those committed to their charge, than that their whole care be confined to their accomplishments and attainments in *scholarship*, and by so much the more fatal a miscarriage in the former

mer than in the latter. I would not here be thought to insinuate, That human literature is of small consequence in education; on the contrary, I do not know one branch of knowledge, which any man (of a middling station, at least, and who is endued with a tolerable measure of natural sense,) had better be wholly ignorant of: for I am convinced, That giving the mind an early turn to *Knowledge* of any innocent kind is doing it a very eminent service: because, being an active and restless principle, it will, in its search after happiness, run out in pursuit after either the objects of *Sense*, to wit, Pleasure, Power, or Riches; or after those of the *Mind*, to wit, Knowledge, Virtue, or Religion: and every one knows, how much it were to be desired, that mankind would cultivate their *rational* rather than their *sensual* faculties, and place their happiness in the acquisition of the objects of the former than the latter.

Were I to put together a sketch of what I think every youth ought to be instructed in, before the time of life that is proper for going to business or an university, it would be much in the following manner.

First, the knowledge of *Grammar* seems to be a thing of that universal usefulness for leading people into a method of speaking or writing their thoughts correctly and intelligibly, and of rightly apprehending those of others, that I think no man (however low his station may be) ought to be without it, and that children, whose parents either do not choose, or cannot afford them a classical education, ought to be taught Grammar in their mother tongue, the science being the same through all languages. Along with Grammar, *Orthography* and *Pointing* ought to be taught; as nothing more betrays a mean and sordid education than false spelling, nor is there any thing more apt to occasion misapprehensions of a person's meaning, which, in business,

business, sometimes prove fatal, than the want of proper points and stops in his letters or other writings, and the running of one sentence into another.

The knowledge of *Latin* and *Greek* (especially the first) seems rather valuable on account of their being the foundation of most modern languages, than for their own sake. If it be true, which is commonly asserted, that there is scarce a radical word in any of the modern tongues of above two syllables long, that is not derived from one or other of them, it can hardly be supposed a person, who is a perfect stranger to these languages, can thoroughly enter into the sense and spirit of his own mother-tongue. In instructing youth in the *Latin* language, I should think it advisable to make them familiar with the *Historians*, rather than the *Poets*, as the writings of the first are truly useful and instructing, whereas those of the last generally tend to hurt the morals of youth, or at least to fill their brains with false and romantic ideas, and to lessen their value for truth. There are innumerable passages in *Ovid*, *Horace*, and some others of the Heathen poets commonly in the hands of young people, that ought not to be in print, or any way exposed to public view in a Christian country. And indeed the perusal of the best of them is only travelling through fairy-land, and treading on enchanted ground. It is at least absolutely necessary, that youth be guarded from the bad effects of too great an admiration for heathen poetry, by giving them early a just contempt for its childish fables, and by shewing them the advantages of our rational and sublime religion when set in contrast with the absurd and wretched mythology of the antients, which has nothing in it really valuable, except that a little knowledge of it serves to illustrate some obscure parts of history, as it has greatly clouded and

darkened many more. The knowledge of the *Greek* language is worth the pains of any young person, who has leisure to attain it; for the sake of reading the Septuagint translation of the Bible, the New Testament, and the writings of the earliest Fathers of the Christian church, in the original.

The *French language* is so easily acquired, that, though not one person in an hundred ever has any great occasion for it in life, I think it is worth while for youth to employ some of their leisure hours in reading it.

The art of *Writing*, being a mechanical thing, may be acquired by a youth of any sort of genius, bright or dull, through dint of practice and application.

Drawing is an art both elegant and useful; but ought by no means to be forced upon every youth: for none but such as are born with a genius for it, will succeed at it.

Music, as it is not to be acquired without a natural taste, so it ought to be very sparingly indulged, where there is a genius for it. It is a bewitching art, and one way or other is hurtful to most people, who delight in and practise it. If *Dancing* is to be learned at all, it ought to be dispatched in early youth, for various reasons.

The knowledge of *Numbers* is wanted by almost every person, every day of his life: nor can the time bestowed in studying the elements of *Mathematics* be grudged by any one who knows their universal usefulness.

The art of *Keeping accounts* distinct and regular, after the *Italian* method, is so beautiful, and at the same time useful, less or more, to people almost in all stations in life, that I think no man ought to be without it, and the rather because it is in itself so simple and easily acquired.

Geography is a science not less useful than simple; for a person can hardly enter into any conversation,
read

read any piece of history, or rightly understand an article in a News-paper, without some knowledge of the situations of places: nor does it require any acuteness of genius or intense application, being almost wholly a work of Memory.

I do not think it difficult to give most young people, who have reached the age of twelve, tho' they be not intended for an academical education, a tolerable notion of theoretical *Astronomy*, so as to enable them to form some idea of the vastness of the system of the universe, and the general laws, by which its motions and revolutions are carried on. I think the same may be said of the science of *Anatomy*, or the knowledge of the structure of animal bodies, especially the human. By communicating a little of these two last mentioned parts of knowledge to youth, they cannot miss being led to entertain high and elevated notions of the Maker and Governor of the world, and must thereby be engaged to fear and obey him from rational and worthy motives. There is indeed no part of the works of nature, the contemplation of which will not delight and improve a young and innocent mind, and also enlarge and raise it above every thing that is mean or unworthy of its attention; and the advantage of giving young people an early turn to *Knowledge* is not to be imagined, as it pre-engages them, before the dangerous and mischievous objects of *Sense* get hold of them, and serves for food to the mind, which otherwise must run after gratifications of a far inferior and more unworthy kind. A set of *microscopical observations*, a few experiments in *natural philosophy*, such as those of the air-pump, &c. and a few of those *books* which are written on purpose for introducing youth to a little knowledge of that kind, are all extremely proper for employing their leisure hours from twelve years of age and upwards.

But there is no kind of reading that tends more to settle the judgment, than that of *History* and *Biography*, or the lives of eminent persons; which leads to the most useful of all sorts of knowledge, I mean that of *human nature*; and to prudence in the conduct of life; without which all other kinds of learning are rather an incumbrance than any advantage in a man's affairs.

Young people ought also from their earliest years to be established in a rational set of *political principles*, and taught the love of *liberty* and their *country*, and consequently the hatred of Popery, Tyranny, Persecution, Venality, and whatever else is against the interest of a free people. They ought at the same time to be taught the proper medium betwixt an abject and slavish disposition in a people on the one side, and absolute licentiousness, and a spirit of murmuring and complaining without reason against their governors, on the other; and that the true spirit of liberty is always corrected and restrained by a proper *submission* to government. They ought as soon as possible to be prepossessed against Party disputes and contentions, and taught to judge of them from *History*, and should be informed, that whatever the furious zealots on each side have pretended, experience has shewn, That *Self* has been generally at the bottom with both; that party is very justly said to be the madness of many for the gain of a few; and that a Patriot is only a Courtier out of place, and a Courtier a Patriot in place: That wherever a set of men are found to stick obstinately together, to go through thick and thin, and to approve and disapprove constantly the same measures and proceedings, it is almost an infallible mark of party; because it is hardly conceivable, that a great number of men should exactly agree in their sentiments upon a great number of different points, without any variation, unless they contrive to agree together for
the

the sake of carrying on some particular scheme, distinct from the interest of their country. They ought early to be accustomed to consider themselves as every day drawing nearer and nearer to a state of maturity, when they must (if an untimely death prevent not) think of acting a part on the stage of life, and becoming *members of society*. They cannot therefore be too early forewarned of the strange vicissitudes of human life, they may afterwards have occasion to pass through; nor too strongly guarded against the various arts of flatterers or other crafty and designing men, nor too well instructed how to detect them. They should be taught a series of rules for their prudent conduct in life, and how to distinguish the faulty from the laudable, to which it bears the nearest resemblance; the prudent from the suspicious and over-cautious, the generous from the lavish, the frugal from the niggardly, the diligent from the covetous; and so forth. There should be a variety of *Cases* proposed to them, taken from what usually happens in mens commerce and intercourse with one another; and they should be taught to judge and distinguish nicely what is proper and what improper to be done in each of them, and the reasons.

Young people ought to be strongly and early prepossessed against the three fatal *Baits*, which allure the bulk of mankind, and draw them into infinite misery and misfortune in the present life, and often into utter destruction at last, I mean, *Ambition*, *Covetousness*, and *Love of Pleasure*. They ought to be taught, That the satisfaction (if it may be so called, which *Ambition* offers, is altogether *imaginary*, consisting wholly in the applause of *others*, which will never give any happiness to a wise man, as it is of no value unless where it serves to *confirm* the judgment of his own *Conscience*. That no wise or good man will ever do any action for the sake

of

of applause, which his own conscience will not warrant, nor will he abstain from or disapprove of any which his own conscience attests to be good and virtuous, and proper to be done in his circumstances, merely because he knows the superficial multitude will find fault with it, who almost constantly approve and disapprove in the wrong place.

To create in young people a contempt of the erroneous and ill-judged applause of men, such instances as the following should be often laid before them, and the mistakes of *common opinion* exposed to their observation. That we see the most laborious, industrious, and useful part of mankind generally treated with neglect and contempt, and at the same time the idle, the inactive and most useless part of the species, I mean, the rich, who feed and riot, and fatten on the labours of their fellow-creatures, adored as gods upon earth. That we see mankind admire learning, wit and courage in men, and outside beauty in the other sex, and all the while neglect the less ostentatious, but infinitely more valuable virtues of humility, meekness, prudence, benevolence, patience, and mortification. That the superficial multitude have disgraced the honest husbandman, who employs himself in raising out of the earth what is the support of the life of his fellow-creatures, with the contemptuous name of *Clown*, and have at the same time dignified those wild-beasts called warriors, who spend their lives in butchering their fellow-creatures, with the title of *Heroes* or *Great-men*. That according to the common opinion of mankind, it is no shame to get wealth by grinding the face of the poor, by craft, by scraping, and all the mean arts that can be practised with safety from the laws of the land; but it is a great shame to be poor for want of impudence to elbow mankind, or through too much narrowness of conscience, or too much largeness

of

of heart. That, according to the opinion of mankind, affliction is of all things the most to be dreaded, and prosperity the most to be desired ; whereas the truth is quite the contrary way : for that prosperity generally hurts mens virtue, whereas adversity for the most part strengthens the mind, and makes the heart better ; so that the bulk of mankind being by divine providence subjected in the present state to various hardships and miseries, is a mark of the tenderness of the Governor of the world to his creatures. That according to common opinion, it is a greater happiness to get and hoard up, than to deal out liberally and generously ; whereas in truth, to bestow with prudence on the deserving and indigent is like a god, and to scrape together riches, like an earth-worm. That according to common opinion, it is a crime in a man of fortune not to live extravagantly, that is, according to the vulgar notion, suitably to his fortune. Whereas the truth is, that for a man of great wealth to spend his whole income without bestowing a reasonable proportion of it upon the truly indigent, is embezzling what was only *intrusted* to him, not *given* him ; a great estate being properly a *stewardship* committed to a particular person for trial of his charity, and his abstinence, as poverty is a trial of another set of virtues, and not the effect of any partiality of divine providence in his favour to the prejudice of other men.

A youth, early and frequently led to observe in these and innumerable other instances the false and erroneous ways the multitude have of judging of men and things, must see the folly of placing one's happiness in their applause, and will thereby learn to despise the allurements of Ambition. And indeed it is the fault of his parents or instructors, if he be not made to understand, that he who never knew to distribute unseen and unthanked, to steal
oppor-

opportunities of doing worthy actions, never to be known publickly, till read out of the records, by which we are to be judged at the last day; who never could condescend to what the erroneous world calls *Meanness*, for the sake of doing good; that who never could do these things, and do them without so much as a wish for any other approbation than that of his conscience and his Judge, and who has no relish for this feast of the mind in his private retirement, knows nothing of the disinterested love of God and of goodness for their own sakes.

And, to prevent a young person's being insinared by degrees, as he advances in life, into the love of money, and at length into covetousness, he ought to be made to understand, that the only real value of riches is, their being capable of being applied to the purchase of the necessaries and conveniencies of life, and to the relief of the indigent. That the contents of all the mines of *Peru* are not in reality so valuable, as one acre of ground covered with wheat; and that a fresh egg is of more real worth than the diamond lately brought from the *Brazils*, of much the same bulk, which was valued at four hundred Millions; because the first will save the life of a human creature from famine; but the latter is not capable of being applied to any sort of use, besides pleasing the eye. That all above the conveniencies of life is absolutely useless, and indeed troublesome. That after a person has acquired such a competency as will keep him and his family above dependence, and in easy circumstances according to his station in the world, it is not worth his while to go a step out of his way for the sake of gaining ten thousand pounds more, because he can but live conveniently at last, and has no occasion to bring upon himself more cares and embarrassments. That a few years will put an end to

the life of the youngest man alive, and that it will give him no more satisfaction on his death-bed to reflect, that he has fifty thousand pounds in the funds, than that there are fifty thousand shells at the bottom of the sea. That, supposing every man infallibly certain of gaining an estate, who will take the pains for it, which is very far from being the case, exorbitant wealth and happiness have nothing to do with one another, since we commonly see discontented faces in gilded chariots, and day labourers making merry in spite of toil and poverty. That the possession of great wealth exposes men to a thousand inconveniencies and temptations, such as, The incumbrance of a croud of servants and attendants, The continual buz of slavish flatterers and hangers-on, The fatigue of overseeing great affairs, or the vexation of losses by entrusting them to others, and, which is worse than all the rest, The risque of one's virtue, through the snares of the world, and the deceit of riches, which are so hard to resist, that we find in fact the rich are, generally speaking, persons of the least amiable or perfect characters. That the honours said to attend on riches are a mere cheat; since the fulsome respect, that is paid to a rich man at his levee, is only a public proof given by the person, who pays it, of his own want of sense, in being struck with what is of no real worth in itself; and being paid to the wealth, and not to the person, who possesses it, is by no means worth envying.

And lastly, as to Pleasure, young people ought to be guarded as strongly as possible against its allurements by being forewarned of its bewitching nature, and dangerous consequences, of its unsatisfactoriness, and the natural and constant tendency it has to raise unquiet and restless imaginations, and desires in the mind; but especially by being led into a taste of the *innocent* instead of the criminal pleasures,

pleasures, and the *mental*, instead of those of the *senses*. A taste for knowledge, and retirement, if young people can be drawn into it, and of the conversation of the few old people who are chearful, knowing, communicative, and lovers of the conversation of youth, may do great service toward preserving them from this most dangerous and fatal snare. They ought to be told, That there are no true pleasures but what are lawful, and that those sorts of enjoyments, which leave a sting behind them, ought not to be called *pleasures*, but *troubles*, and *torments*. They ought to be frequently put in mind, that it is only the good and virtuous who have any right to the pleasures of life, or who indeed can truly enjoy them; for that it is a contradiction to suppose, that a person, whose conscience is wounded by guilt, and whose mind (if he is not past thinking, which is still a worse state) must be in continual pain through remorse for what is past, and horror at the thought of what is to come, should be capable of relishing any sort of joy or comfort: but that a good man, whose mind is calm and undisturbed, has both the advantage of freedom from pain or fear, and a proper disposition for relishing the natural and innocent pleasures of life, and is like to receive infinitely more happiness from them than a wicked man, because he may justly consider them as the gifts of a tender and bountiful father, whose favour he has reason to hope for, which must give them an additional relish, and because he expects nothing from them, but what they will really afford, and has still in reserve a higher happiness, after the gratifications of sense have done their part. Young people ought also to be led to consider pleasure as naturally and necessarily opposite to every thing that is manly or great, as it tends to soften and enervate the mind, and to render it unfit for encountering any difficulty, or
applying

applying to any labour. They ought to be told, That, whatever men may say, in the hours of mirth and jollity, in defence of a voluptuous life, there needs no better confutation of the fallshood of their reasoning, than what they themselves furnish : for, though most people in the gay time of life are continually crying out, that they have not had half their share of the pleasures of the world ; in their old age, and on their death-beds they are generally found to lament, that they have enjoyed and indulged them a great deal too much. A youth ought to be told, that there is a great deal of danger, when he comes to die, of his having many neglects and omissions to repent of ; but that there is no fear of his repenting on his death-bed, that he had omitted to see a particular new play on the first night, or slipt an opportunity of getting drunk, or of debauching a virgin ; so that at least a life of sobriety and abstinence is on the *safe* side. Young people should also be prepared for opposing and confuting the frivolous and fallacious arguments commonly advanced by their thoughtless companions of their own age, in defence of a life of pleasure ; of which the most formidable one I can at present remember, is the following, *viz.* Since God has given us desires and appetites, why should we not gratify them at all events ? Which thundering piece of artillery may at once be silenced by only retorting the following question. Since God has so formed me, that when I am extremely heated with exercise, I have a great desire to cool myself as quickly as possible, why should I not throw off my cloaths, and expose myself to the air, though it should occasion my death ? and since I have a great thirst, why should I not drink a plentiful draught of cold water, though it should give me a surfeit ? and, in short, since God has given me a variety of appetites and inclinations, why should I not satisfy

them all at random, without the least thought of the consequences? They should be taught, that there is no desire or appetite natural to the human species, but what may be *innocently gratified*, and may also be *abused*; and that the rule to be observed with regard to all the natural inclinations and appetites, is, To gratify them only in such a manner, and within such bounds of moderation, as will best serve to gain the ends for which they were implanted in the human constitution, and that whoever breaks through this rule is guilty of a crime. They should be forewarned, that taking a full swing of lawless pleasure in youth is only treasuring up for all the following years of life an inexhaustible fund of pain and torment, and this upon the most favourable supposition, *viz.* That they afterwards repent of the follies of youth, which if it should not happen, the consequences are still infinitely worse. They should likewise be shewn the absurdity of resolving (as is too commonly done) to indulge themselves in all the various madness of youth, and to go on in a course of guilty pleasure, with hopes of repenting of it afterwards. That for a person to do so, is to hope that he shall be heartily ashamed and confounded at what he has done; to hope that he shall a thousand and a thousand times wish it undone; to hope that he shall hate and loath himself for what he has been guilty of; to hope that he shall suffer ten thousand times more pain from shame and remorse than ever he enjoyed pleasure in the pursuit of criminal delights; to hope that he shall have the satisfaction of knowing himself to have been a fool and a madman; to hope that he shall have the happiness of knowing, that he has done what may justly expose him to the divine vengeance; to hope, that he shall be obliged to undertake the disagreeable and almost insuperable task of rooting out confirmed habits, and planting
opposite

opposite ones in their place, of parting with vices as dear to him as a right-hand or a right-eye*, and of wholly new modelling his mind; in short, it is to hope, that he shall have the happiness of seeing himself in great danger of final destruction. Blessed hopes! glorious prospects! worthy for which to give up one's innocence and peace of mind in the present life, and the prospect of happiness in that which is to come.

Pleasure being the most alluring and most dangerous of the three principal baits that draw in mankind to the ways of perdition, and being more peculiarly prevalent in the time of youth, I have been the more copious upon this head: but after all, I must repeat, that I know of no method, that will have any chance of being effectual for saving young people from its snares, without giving their minds a turn another way, and leading them into a taste and love for objects and entertainments of a different nature.

By treating young people in this manner as *rational creatures*, and teaching them to exert their reason, and to judge rightly of men and things, as they are in themselves, and as they were originally constituted by the Supreme Being, and not according to outward appearance, they would come out into the world, not as the most part of youth do from schools and colleges, with heads full of unwieldy knowledge, the greatest part of which they can apply to no use in life, but with judgments in some measure settled and matured for action, and prepared for the difficulties of life by a sort of anticipated experience.

But to come at length to the main intention of this Essay, I must own, it is to me very surprizing that many truly learned and ingenious men have been at so much pains in contriving plans for edu-

* Matt. xviii. 8, 9.

cation, and have all the while missed or overlooked the most excellent and most comprehensive one that ever was or will be invented for forming and perfecting the mind, and raising it to the nature almost of angels, and this state almost to that of Heaven, I mean The CHRISTIAN RELIGION. One author on the subject proposes, that youth be taught principles of strict honour, and a strong aversion at falshood; another, that they be very early taught to consider themselves as members of society, and to love their country; and a third, that the examples of the great men of antiquity be set before them, and that they be often put in mind of their conduct, and directed to imitate it. All which schemes are so far extremely good. But, if it be certain, that there are no *Truths* of equal importance to mankind, with those that are discovered by the Christian revelation, that there are no such sublime or such worthy *notions* of the *supreme Being*, no such just notions of the nature of *Man*, no such clear views of his *Duty* and way to *happiness*, to be found any where else as in the Christian revelation, nor such a perfect and sublime system of *Morality*, nor such a set of illustrious *Examples* of true greatness and heroism to copy after, nor such views of the direful *Consequences* of vice, nor such full and well established Prospects of a final *Reward* to virtue communicated to mankind by any other means; why should Parents or Instructors of youth stop short, and not rather resolve at once to take the only effectual and complete method of forming and establishing the minds of those under their care by making them thoroughly acquainted with the *Christian Religion*?

That the implanting in the minds of youth a set of principles of virtue and religion upon the Christian plan would be of the greatest advantage to mankind considered either as individuals, or as members of society,

society, one would think, should not need much reasoning or argumentation to prove. And yet there are some, who, to palliate or excuse their own neglect of their duty, affect to represent it as either *impossible* to be done with any considerable success, or as of *inferior* consequence; which only shews how men can blind or prostitute their reason to serve indirect ends. Instead of going about to establish the importance of a virtuous and religious education upon a long deduction of arguments, or upon authorities from the writings of the greatest men of antient or modern times, I shall only take the liberty to leave with those gentlemen the few following Queries, and then proceed without taking up a great deal of the leisure of other readers, to whom the importance of the subject appears evident and unquestionable.

Quer. 1. Whether that period of the life of man, in which the mind is most tractable, most clear of all manner of prejudices and pre-engagements, most free from the cares of the world, and temptations either from without or from within, is not universally allowed to be the fittest for laying the foundation of all useful knowledge; and if so, why the time of youth is not equally proper for the study of Morality and Religion as of human literature?

2. Whether any one can pretend, That either the knowledge of the obligations of Morality, or the doctrines of the Christian religion are harder to be comprehended than those parts of human literature, which youth are usually taught almost in their earliest years, as Grammar, Arithmetic, and the elements of Mathematics, &c?

3. Why it is by no means thought proper to leave people to find out by themselves, after they arrive at years of discretion, the knowledge of Grammar or Numbers, the art of Writing, and the other parts

parts of improvement, which usually employ the first years of life, if it be proper (as some people seem to think) to leave them to themselves to find out a set of moral and religious Principles, and the art of governing their Passions, till they are past the proper time of life for improvements of almost all sorts, and come to be engaged amidst the cares and temptations of the world; or whether any one can alledge, That it is more dangerous for a person to be unfurnished in that sort of knowledge, which is necessary only for the present life, than in that which serves to prepare him for happiness in the life to come?

4. Whether there is any imaginable danger or any worse consequence, that can follow from implanting as early as possible in the minds of youth the principles and habits of virtue and religion, than That those principles and habits are likely to acquire the greater strength the earlier they are implanted, as all sorts of principles or habits are constantly known to do through length of time?

5. Whether the habits of Vice and Profaneness, which must of course take possession of an uncultivated mind, as naturally as weeds do of uncultivated ground, whether the various cares and avocations of life, which in riper years are ever intruding and withdrawing one's attention from his duty and the improvement of his mind, whether the innumerable temptations, which are continually soliciting our senses, and the prevailing force of almost universal example; whether all these together, I say, are not more than sufficient effectually to prevent any person, who has not in early youth had his mind tinctured with principles of Virtue and Religion, from ever acquiring them in any after part of his life?

6. Whether the only reason, why people brought up from their earliest years in the grossest errors
and

and superstitions, as Heathenism and Popery, are so strongly attached to those absurdities through their whole lives, is not The mere force of the prejudice of education ; and since this prejudice is so powerful as to make men obstinately retain, without daring to examine them, a set of irrational and contradictory notions, the absurdity of which would appear still more and more glaring as the judgment improves, if it were not for the prejudice of education ; whether it is not well worth while to take the advantage of this prevailing prejudice, by implanting early in the minds of youth a set of rational principles, the justness and obligation of which their reason will shew them more and more clearly as it improves and enlarges, and which they will consequently be through their whole lives doubly attached to, both from Education and Conviction.

7. Whether, of two persons, one of which has had his mind in early youth established upon virtuous and religious principles, and the other has been left to himself, the first has not a very great advantage of the second, in case of their being both in the after part of their lives overpowered by temptation, and hurried from the ways of virtue and sobriety into those of pleasure and sensuality ; since the first has that within him, which will probably awaken him sooner or later, and force him like the Prodigal in the gospel, or *Noah's* dove, to return to where he stray'd from, and to seek happiness and peace where he knows by his own experience they are certainly to be found, *viz.* in Virtue and Religion ; whereas the other having never been initiated in those principles, and having no experience of the happiness they give, can hardly either be supposed capable to judge how to attain that happiness, or be expected to have any desire for it.

In recommending to Parents and Instructors of youth to make those committed to their charge acquainted with the *Christian Religion*, I would be un-

derstood to mean, The Religion of the New Testament. For that the end is by no means to be gained by teaching them any of the erroneous and inconsistent *systems*, which men of *weak* judgments or of *crafty* and designing tempers have spun out of their own brains, and imposed upon mankind for true Christianity with the sanction of anathemas and fire and sword. On the contrary, there is great danger in a young person's being in an authoritative manner commanded to believe a set of *Notions*, which his reason, as soon as he comes to the use of it, and begins to examine for himself, as many people do in this age and country of liberty, will shew him to be irrational and absurd, lest he should conclude the *Christian religion* to be irrational and absurd, since he finds that *what he was taught* for the Christian religion is so; and that he presently grow entirely out of conceit of *revelation*, and turn at once downright *Deist*.

The Christian religion may justly be called, according to the phrase of its divine Author, † “An easy yoke and a light burden.” For it delivers no doctrines, *as necessary to be understood and believed*, but what are altogether as intelligible and consistent with *Reason*, and the justest *Notions* of the nature of God and the nature of man, as easily to be accounted for, and as much within our comprehension, as thousands of facts we see actually take place in the *natural world*,* and consequently must believe

to

† *Matth. xi. 30.*

* Methinks those long-headed gentlemen the Deists, before they go to work to pull the Christian religion to pieces on account of some particulars in it, which they tell us they cannot comprehend, or reconcile to their notions, should in the first place shew us, that they *can* comprehend all the mysteries in nature, and reconcile them to their notions. Before they tell us, that it is inconsistent with the notion of infinite Goodness to suppose, That God should choose to forgive his offending creatures through an expiation and intercession rather than without

to be fit and right ; nor does it establish any laws, which it would not be much better for mankind, even in the *present* life, and without regard to futurity, to observe and regulate their conduct by : and since this is the character of our holy religion in itself, of what condemnation shall they be thought worthy, who, for the sake of any *indirect* ends whatever, have clogged it with a heap of *Absurdities* of their *own* invention, which *it knows nothing of*, and thus have laid a set of *stumbling-blocks* in the way of the honest mind, that otherwise would have readily and cheerfully embraced the truth.

I must also here beg leave to say, That I see no necessity, why the memories of young people should be loaded, or their understandings puzzled with the more abstruse parts of revelation, the comprehending or believing of which is no where asserted in scripture to be necessary to salvation : For it is certain there are many parts of scripture, which will

out them, they should shew us how it is consistent with the notion of infinite goodness, that one half of the animal creation should be made to be devoured by the other, and that some of the most beautiful and most harmless of God's creatures should be exposed to continual fear through their whole lives, and at last to a cruel death, for the sake of supporting some other species of creatures, which to us seem to be the very blot of the creation, and the burden of the earth. Before they begin to dispute the truth of the Incarnation, because they cannot comprehend how One, who was before the creation, should take upon him a human body, they ought first to shew us that they understand exactly how a human or any other spirit is first placed in the body it animates, and wherein the absurdity lies, of supposing a spirit capable of being placed in a body created a thousand years after it begun to exist, more than in supposing that a spirit may animate a body created an hour after it, or before it, or at the same time with it. And before they begin by long deductions and subtle reasonings to invalidate the proofs of Christianity, which is not founded in argumentation, but in simple facts incomparably better attested than any facts in *history*, they should shew us, that all the relations in history, that are true, are incapable of being cavilled at.

never be rightly understood in this life: but it is no where asserted, that the clear understanding of those difficult passages is *necessary to Salvation*.

And far less would I advise, that youth be taught to place the whole of religion in violent Zeal for any party or for any particular opinions. On the contrary, they ought to be from their earliest years prepossessed against all manner of narrowness or harshness in judging of others, since the Great, the Wise, and the Pious have in all ages differed, and ever will differ, in particulars; but have at the same time always allowed one another full liberty of examining, and declaring their sentiments. And indeed the wrath of man will never work the righteousness of God. Persecution or ill usage on account of matters of opinion are not the ways to support Truth; but have been invented and practised merely to aggrandize and support Parties and worldly interests. To say, that the truths of religion are not able to support themselves upon a fair and candid examination, without assistance from secular power, is saying, That they are not agreeable to reason, or that their evidence is not sufficient, or that the author of our religion committed a mistake in prohibiting his apostles and followers, as he every where does, ever to make use of force, or to apply to the secular arm. Upon the whole, it is my judgment, that young people ought to be taught, That there is no *Heresy so bad*, nor so *contrary* to the spirit of *Christianity*, as, to believe it to be proper or lawful to *bate* or *persecute* a fellow-creature and a brother, for an *Opinion*, which he declares, in the simplicity and sincerity of his heart, he has impartially *examined*, and thinks he finds to be *agreeable* to the sense of *Scripture*.

First then, taking it for granted, that the youth, to be instructed in the Christian religion, has had his mind from the earliest dawnings of reason form-
ed

ed to the love of *Truth* for its own sake, and to the gentle and tractable temper, which is necessary for one, who would submit to the obedience of good and salutary *Laws*; taking it for granted, I say, that this has been done before the age of *six*, the first step to be taken, is, in my opinion, to make him acquainted with the *Christian Morality*. The beauties of the Christian dispositions of Humility, Meekness, Temperance, Benevolence, and the rest, are obvious to the apprehension of a *Child*; for a sense of right and wrong, and of the excellencies of virtue and the deformities of vice, is what appears in the human mind with the very *first* openings of reason. For this purpose that most perfect, and most sublime of all systems of Morality, our Saviour's *Discourse on the Mount*, Mat. v, vi, and vii, ought to be imprinted in indelible characters upon his understanding and memory. Whatever, through the disadvantage of the bare literal translation, and of a few antiquated words, used by the translators, is not obvious to him, ought to be explained, and himself over and over examined from time to time, to see that he retains the clear and full *sense* of those divine precepts upon his mind. He ought to be taught, that his everlasting happiness, and that of all men to whom Christianity is known, depends upon his *forming* his mind and practice upon that perfect model. He ought to be every day told, That, if he do not acquire the *Dispositions* there recommended, and observe the *Laws* there established, he cannot possibly arrive at happiness at last; as he neither can in himself be *qualified* for it, nor will the great Judge of all *confer* it on any who are disobedient. He ought to be informed, that every degree of Anger, Malice, Pride, Obstinacy, Falshood, and so forth, are breaches of this awful and tremendous law, by which we are all to be judged at last: and

and he ought to be taught to examine all the parts of his own conduct by it; and to know when he is guilty of a violation of any of its precepts, and when he swerves from that pattern of perfection.

A person had better be uninformed, or unsettled in his notions of any, or all other matters of science, than of *Morality*: for we are properly *moral* agents, and our everlasting state is to be determined according to the eternal rules of moral Right and Wrong, as they stand in the Divine mind. And in all sciences, except *Morality*, either our knowledge is scanty, or our opinions uncertain, our reasonings fallacious, our enquiries laborious, our disputes endless, in some our positions unintelligible by the bulk of mankind, and in others our discoveries useless. In *Morality*, our knowledge is perfect, our opinions are in the main agreed, our reasonings clear, our enquiries easy, our disputes (if there be any such) determinable from revelation, our positions intelligible to all capacities, and the knowledge of the subject absolutely necessary to our happiness both here and hereafter.

There is no young person, of a tolerable capacity, of the age of ten, or upwards, but may be led on gradually through a scheme or view of natural and revealed religion from the first principles of common sense in the following manner. First, No youth of that age is ignorant that God made him and all the world. Next, in order to give him some notion of the Supreme Being and his perfections, he may be easily led to judge, that a Being who could make the vast system of the universe, the earth, which is so great that there are many regions of it yet unknown*, and the sun, the

* Here it is to be supposed natural for an Instructor of youth to turn to a book of Geography, or put the youth in mind of what he has taught him of the greatness of the terraqueous globe.

planets, and fixed stars, so amazingly distant from us and from one another *, and all from nothing, must be possessed of immense power. That he who has created such an endless variety of animate and inanimate creatures, all so nicely fitted for their several uses, that the more we examine, the more skill, contrivance, and design we find †, must be a Being of inconceivable wisdom. And that He, who has made such ample provision of convenient and pleasant habitations, of suitable food, and even of innumerable delicacies and varieties for his creatures ‖, must undoubtedly be endued with unbounded goodness and benevolence. Thus a youth may be convinced of three of the divine attributes, viz. infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, almost by his bodily senses. The others he may by degrees be led to conceive of, as well as his years and capacity will admit. After this, it is natural to ask him, whether he does not think, that he and all reasonable creatures are obliged to some kind of service and duty to the Creator and Governor of all things, upon whom all depend, and to whom all creatures are indebted for whatever they enjoy or hope, and to whom they must be accountable at last. Then he may be made to understand, that if he ought to love, honour, and obey his earthly parents, he ought much more to love, honour, and obey the great Father and Creator of both his parents and himself, and of all mankind. That, if he ought to behave in the same manner to his instructors and teachers, he is much more strongly bound to those duties towards the God of wisdom,

* And here it would be proper to shew him a general view of the magnitudes and distances of the heavenly bodies in any of the most simple and familiar books of astronomy.

† *Derham's Physico-theology, Nature display'd, &c.* will be proper to consult here.

‖ See the same, and various other authors on these subjects.

to whom his instructors owe their capacity to teach him, and to whom he himself owes his capacity for improvement. That, if it is base and wicked to the last degree to be forgetful of kindnesses done him by men, who have it not in their power to do him any very great favours, it must be infinitely more so to be unthankful to Him, to whom he owes his very being and all he enjoys. And lastly, that, if it be extremely foolish and absurd for any one to disobey or treat in a contemptuous manner a person in a superior station, who has it in his power to punish him, and who at the same time requires no obedience of him but what is just and proper, and is more for his own than his superior's advantage, it is beyond conception impious and ridiculous to refuse obedience to the supreme Lord and Ruler of all things, who can crush or destroy a world with a word; especially seeing the obedience he requires is in itself highly reasonable, and tends to the advantage and improvement of his creatures, and is not required of them from mere arbitrary will and tyrannical pleasure, but for answering the ends of their creation, and to qualify them for happiness.

After this, it is proper to inform a youth, that God has communicated to us his will by Jesus Christ, and sent him into the world to give us a more perfect Rule and Directory for our obedience than was ever known to mankind before, as well as to revive what moral knowledge through barbarity and vice was lost, and that therefore higher degrees of strictness and purity of life and manners will be required and expected of us, than of the rest of mankind.

To hear the Christian religion recommended, to see the beauty and propriety of most of its laws, and to let it pass without opposing it, but at the same time without being in a rational manner convinced

vinced of its being truly of *divine original*, such a reception as this will never effectually engage any one to it, nor secure him from explaining away many very important parts both of a sound belief and of a strictly regular practice. But he, who receives and embraces it, because he has upon a thorough examination found it to bear the marks and characters of an appointment of God, will not venture to trifle with any of either its doctrines or precepts, but will be steadfast and unmoveable to the last, in the belief of the one and the practice of the other, in spite of all the trivial objections and cavils of Deists against its doctrines, or Libertines against its precepts. And he, who on rational grounds receives and embraces the Christian religion, and in the sincerity and honesty of his heart desires to believe and understand it as it is in scripture, without partiality for or against any particular doctrines or opinions pretended to be revealed in it, and who earnestly strives to his utmost power to form his mind and regulate his practice according to its laws; such a person, without doubt, is not far from the kingdom of God. It is therefore my opinion, that neither ministers from their pulpits, nor those who have the care of youth, can labour this point too much, nor employ too much time and pains in establishing those committed to their charge in the rational and well-grounded *belief* of Christianity, especially in an age in which a set of vain and shallow pretenders to wit or reasoning are on all occasions endeavouring (unluckily enough indeed for themselves) to sap the foundations of it. We find in Scripture, that *Faith* or *Belief* is generally put for the whole of religion; and very justly: for it is the foundation upon which the whole must rest, and wherever it possesses the mind of a person in its full strength and evidence, it will

F

influence

influence and over-rule his whole conduct, and affect his whole character. And that the firm Belief of genuine Christianity is the most effectual means that can be imagined for ennobling and perfecting the human nature, is undeniably plain from comparing the character of the *bulk* of mankind in Heathenish countries, where the light of Christianity has not shone, and in popish, where it has been extinguished by error and superstition, with the character of the bulk of the Christians of the first ages, who enjoyed it in its original purity, as they all stand in history. And that the lives and characters of pretended Christians in succeeding ages have come short of those of the primitive times, is owing *alone* to the want of that strong and steady *belief* of it in its *original purity*, which they had. For its natural effect and tendency has ever been and ever will be the same, and wherever it is understood and embraced as it was at first delivered by its divine Author, it will produce its effect. And wherever it is fairly proposed, undisguised and uninjured by the *inventions* of men, with all its *evidences* and all its *excellencies* set in a strong and proper light, it will not fail to produce conviction, in any teachable and unprejudiced mind. Whoever therefore has it in his power to do justice to the Christian religion, and has opportunities of promoting the reception of it among mankind, which I am sure, Parents and Instructors of youth have, whoever has such opportunities, and neglects them, must answer another day, for such neglect, as he best can.

I do not think there are many young people, of ten or twelve years of age, or upwards, but what are capable of entering into such reasoning as the following, and perceiving the force of the following evidences of Christianity.

In the first place, if it is plain from the passages here quoted from the New Testament*, that Jesus Christ declares himself to be the Saviour of the world and the Messenger of God to mankind, and if it can be shewn, that he has brought irresistible proofs of his commission, it is certainly the indisputable duty of all men, to whom these proofs are proposed, to believe him, and to obey his laws.

Next, if it can be shewn, That no person ever gave such *rational*, such *great* and such *amiable* views of the Supreme Being, nor such consistent notions of spiritual things, and of futurity† as he did, as will appear upon comparing the whole doctrines || of the greatest of the Heathen philosophers with

* *Mat.* v. 17. vii. 21—23. ix. 6. x. 32, 33. xi. 27. xii. 28. xiii. 37, 41. xvi. 16—20, 27. xviii. 11. xix. 28. xx. 28. xxi. 16. xxiv. 30. xxv. 31. xxvi. 64. *Luke* ii. 49. iv. 21, 43. ix. 48. x. 16. xix. 10. xxii. 29, 69, 70. xxiv. 25—27. *John* i. 49, 50. ii. 16. iii. 13—19. iv. 25, 26, 34. v. 17, 19—47. vi. 27, 32—70. vii. 16, 17, 33. viii. 12, 39. ix. 4, 5. x. 1—42. xi. 25, 27, 41, 42. xii. 23—29, 34—37. 44—50. xiii. 31—34. xiv. xv, xvi, xvii, xviii. 36, 37. xxi. 17, 21. It will be highly proper to turn to these and the following passages, and expound them to the youth; and where there are difficulties, to consult a good commentator.

† *Mat.* iv. 4. v. 3—12, 19, 20, 45, 48. vi. 6—9, 15, 18, 26, 32. vii. 11, 21—28. viii. 11. x. 15, 28—33. xi. 22. xii. 25, 30, 32, 36. xiii. 37—51. xviii. 14, 35. xix. 14. xxii. 29—32. xxxiv. 29—36. xxv. 1—46. *Luke* xi. 31, 32. xiii. 24—30. xv. 3, 7. xvi. 19, 32. xviii. 7. xix. 12—27. xxii. 29, 30. *John* iii. 3—13, 16—22. iv. 10. v. 17, 30. vi. 35—41, 44—46. viii. 44. 51. xi. 25, 26. xiv. 2, 20, 23, 26. xvi. 13, 14, 23, 27, 32. xvii. 1—26.

|| I say the *whole* doctrines, because, tho' it must be owned, That many of the Heathen Philosophers (who seem to have been raised by Providence for valuable purposes) delivered many sublime and useful doctrines and lessons of morality, considered separately from other parts of their works, it must be confessed at the same time, that they mixed with them many trifling, and hurtful tenets and rules of practice, which drew

with those contained in the passages here quoted, it seems highly reasonable to conclude, that he had those notions from above, and was not a person of this world.

And if it can be shewn, That no lawgiver in the world ever proposed a body of such wise and good laws for ennobling men's natures and conducting their lives *, who can doubt, that his wisdom was more than human.

But farther, if it can be shewn, That almost innumerable antient prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in him, and in him only †, is it not reasonable to conclude he really was the Saviour of the world intended in those prophecies?

upon them the contempt of the people of those times, and greatly lessened the benefit mankind might have otherwise received from them: whereas our Saviour's doctrines and precepts (as they stand in the New Testament free from perversions and misrepresentations) are all excellent, and all consistent, and take in whatever was valuable in the writings of the Heathen Philosophers, and leave out all that was trifling or hurtful.

* *Mat.* iv. -, 10. v. vi, vii, x. 16, 28, 32, 33. xii. 12, 36, 50. xv. 3—21. xvi. 24—28. xviii. 3—5, 7—9, 15—18, 21—35. xix. 3—10, 14, 17—30. xx. 26—28. xxiii. 3—28. xxiv. 46, 51. xxv. 1—46. *Luke* viii. 15. ix. 62. x. 30, 41, 42. xi. 28, 41. xii. 15—21, 33, 34. xiii. 2—5, 24—30. xiv. 1—15, 25—34. xv. 11, 32. xvi. 9—31. xvii. 10—15. xix. 12—27. xx. 3, 4. xxi. 34. xxii. 38. *John* iv. 23, 24. v. 24. vi. 27, 29. viii. 34. xii. 25, 26, 44—48. xiii. 14, 15, 34, 35. xiv. 25, 23. xv. 2, 10, 12.

† *Genes.* iii. 15. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxi. 12. xxii. 18. xxvii. 5. xxviii. 14. xlix. 10. *Numb.* xxiv. 8, 17. *Deut.* xviii. 15. 2 *Sam.* xxii. *Job* xix. 25. *Psal.* ii, viii, xvi. 8—11. xviii, xxii. 1, 6—31. xl. 6, 7. xlv, lxii, lxviii. 18. lxix. 9, 21. lxxii. 17. lxxx. 17. xci, cx, cxviii. 22. *Isa.* iv. 2. vii. 14. ix. 2, 6, 7. xi. 1—5. xxviii. 16. xxxii. 1. xxxv. 5. xl. 3. xlii. 1—4, 6—8. xlix. 5. l. 4—10. liii. 2—12. lv. 1—5. lxi. 1, 4. lxiii. 1—9. *Jerem.* xxiii. 3, 6. xxxi. 22. xxxiii. 15—26. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 23, 24. xxxviii. 24. *Dan.* ii. 44. vii. 13. ix. 26. *Hos.* xi. 1. *Micah* v. 2. *Hagg.* ii. 7. *Zach.* iii. 8. vi. 12. ix. 9. xii. 10. xiii. 7. *Mal.* iii. 1—4. iv. 5.

And,

And, if it be evident, that he was so far from gaining any temporal advantage by setting up his religion in the world, that he exposed himself to all manner of abuse, and to death itself † by it, and that it was so far from flattering the vices and wicked inclinations of mankind, that it directly opposed and exclaimed against them ||; who can imagine he had any indirect views in it, or any design to impose on the world.

And, if it be certain, from the history of his life, that he performed almost innumerable miracles* in a publick manner, as healing all sorts of diseases, casting out evil spirits, calming tempests, and even raising the dead, which never were denied either by Jews or Heathens †, and were the completion of various predictions by the antient prophets; that his resurrection was attested by numbers, who gave their lives in witness of the truth of it, in which it was impossible they should be deceived, it being a mere matter of fact, and as plain from the persecution they exposed themselves to by their adherence to this religion, that they had no design to deceive others; that a great variety of miracles were performed by his followers in attestation of their doctrine §; which miracles they declared to be performed for that very purpose, and which were performed before multitudes of enemies and unbelievers, in an age and in countries remarkable for learning, under all manner of disadvantages from the hatred

† Matt. xxvi. 1—5, 45—75. xxvii. 1—50. compared with the two or three last chapters of Mark, Luke and John.

|| See note (*) in pag. 36.

* Matt. viii. 3, 13, 15, 16, 26, 28. ix. 6, 20, 30, 33. xi. 5. xii. 15, 22. xiv. 32, 36. xv. 28, 30. xvii. 18. xix. 2. xx. 34. Mark i. 34. iii. 5.

† Grotius, *Of the Truth of the Christ. relig.*

§ Acts ii. 4, 43. iii. 7. iv. 33. v. 5, 10, 12, 15, 16, 32. vi. 8. viii. 13, 17. ix. 17, 34, 40. x. 46. xiii. 11. xiv. 10. xvi. 18. xix. 11, 12. xx. 12. xxviii. 5, 8, 9.

of those in power, and were not like magic tricks, suddenly over, but of a permanent nature, and might bear being re-examined; that public testimony was given by Heaven itself in favour of the apostles by several amazing prodigies at once, in the sight of a multitude, who, to the astonishment and conviction of three thousand people in one day, heard them speak in a variety of languages they had never learned *; that this religion, levelled directly against the favourite vices and inclinations of men, stripped of all outward pomp or shew for catching the admiration of the multitude, was spread through the whole world by a few mean, illiterate persons, that it was attested by thousands of martyrs, and that its doctrines and laws produced a greater effect upon the lives and manners of mankind, than the labours of all the heathen philosophers put together †, and that it was established in spite of persecution, without assistance from secular power ‡; that Jesus Christ foretold his own death and resurrection §; the universal spreading of his religion ¶, the persecution of his followers **, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the captivity and dispersion of the Jews ††, all which came to pass accordingly; if these facts be all certain and indisputable, what more convincing proof can be desired of Jesus Christ's being truly, what he declares himself, the Saviour of the world, and the only full discoverer of the will of God to mankind.

It does not appear to me, that there is any thing in all this above the capacity of most youths of ten

* *Aas* ii.

† *Aas* ii. 41, 44—47. iv. 4, 34. v. 12—14. ix. 31. xvii. 10, 12, 34. xix. 18, 20, &c. See what is said on this subject, pag. 34.

‡ *Aas* ibid. &c.

§ *Matt.* xvi. 21. xvii. 12. xx. 18. xxvi. 24, &c.

¶ *Matt.* xxiv. *Mark* xiii. 10. xiv. 9, &c.

** *Matt.* v. 11. x. 17—36. xvi. 24. xxiv. 9, &c.

†† *Matt.* xxiii. 37, 38. xxiv. 2, 15—23, 28, 39—41. *Luke* xix. 41. xxi. 20, &c.

or twelve years of age and upwards; or that a youth of that age is not as capable of seeing the force of these arguments in support of Christianity, when laid before him in a manner suitable to his age, as a man of Forty. And the least smattering of any sort of knowledge received in youthful years, while the mind is free and unprejudiced, the imagination warm and lively, and the memory unburdened with a variety of subjects, is hardly to be conceived. Therefore, if any thing be worth learning, or understanding clearly and perfectly, it is of infinite advantage to begin the study of it in the time of youth, rather than to put it off till riper years come on, with all their various cares, avocations and distractions.

What is wanting in this short and imperfect sketch of a few of the evidences of Christianity may abundantly be supplied by the judgment of the parent or instructor with the assistance of a few of the best books on the subject, as Grotius *On the truth of the Christian religion*, Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, Dr. Clarke's *Evidences of revealed religion*, in his book *On the Being and Attributes of God*, &c. In which last mentioned masterly work there is a brief view of prophecy and its completions, which I would recommend to all, who have the care of youth, to give them some insight into, as it will prove an extremely delightful and instructing entertainment to them, and will confirm them most powerfully in the belief of revelation. For who can entertain the least doubt of the truth of a revelation, which shews, by the exact completion of its almost innumerable predictions, that it was given by One, who foreknew what was to happen in the most distant ages to come, of which completion every impartial enquirer may be satisfied, who will take the pains to compare the predictions with the events as they stand recorded in history.

I will

I will here add, for the use of Parents and Instructors of youth, the following brief, but comprehensive view of the scheme of Christianity, the ground-work of which was formed (for private use) by a gentleman, whose writings on Divine subjects have given great pleasure and improvement to many; but whose primitive and exemplary piety and purity of life is his best and most prevailing Work in honour of religion.

The Christian religion is the publication of an Act of grace to a rebellious world, and of the terms upon which God will mercifully receive it into favour.

The views it exhibits are these.

1. God, the original of all being, the Father and Governor of the world.*

2. His creature Man, who was originally obliged to a perfect obedience to all the laws of God, and thereupon insured of a happy immortality, fallen from his first state by disobedience. †

3. The Son of God incarnate voluntarily giving up his life as a sacrifice of expiation ‡ for the sins of man-

* See Note (†) pag. 35.

† Rom. iii. 10, 19—31. v. 12, 14, 18, 19. x. 5. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. Gal. iii. 12, 22. Ephes. ii. 1, &c.

‡ To attempt to settle the dispute concerning the true notion of the *expiation* made by our Saviour, or to determine in what sense he is said in Scripture to have *given his life a ransom*, to have *laid down his life for the sheep*, to be the *propitiation*, the *Lamb*, or *victim*, that *taketh away the sins of the world*; to attempt, I say, to settle that dispute in this little Tract, would be entirely vain and from the purpose. But I think all sides must own, that the expressions of this sort in Scripture being so many and so direct, give sufficient authority to conclude, that whatever the sacrifices under the Jewish œconomy were typically with regard to ceremonial pollution, that the death of Christ was really with regard to moral. Whether either of these is rightly and to their full extent understood at this day, or which is the right notion, and which the wrong, must be left to the decision of the learned. The comfort is, That all that part

mankind, whereby at the same time God's displeasure at sin is clearly set forth to the view of all his creatures, and likewise his willingness to forgive offenders upon any terms consistent with the honour of his laws, or in other words, hereby Almighty God discovers himself in the character both of the wise and righteous Governor, and also the tender and merciful Father of his creatures *.

4. The same glorious Person by being blameless in his life, and at last obedient even to death, setting a perfect example before mankind both of obedience to the laws of God, and of resignation to his will †.

5. The same glorious Person manifesting to mankind, the perfections of God, and declaring his will and our duty in a more sublime and perfect manner than ever was done before, and in an authoritative manner, as one who brought convincing proofs of his commission from heaven for that purpose, and upon the same authority assuring mankind of the

part of the theory of the Christian religion that is *necessary* to be comprehended clearly, is *simple* and *intelligible*, and comes to us attended with super-abundant evidence. As for those doctrines of Revelation, which will bear various explanations, and concerning which the best reasoners differ, being no where in Scripture represented as *necessary* to salvation, while ingenious and pious men exercise their wits, without entering into controversy, in endeavouring to form just notions of them, and to get the better of their difficulties, they employ themselves incomparably better, than they could in the pursuit of either Riches, Power, or Pleasure, and the true notions of them, and their various connexions with things to us at present wholly unknown, perhaps with other systems and orders of Beings, and the extensive and glorious views they may hereafter open to us, may probably furnish entertainment for ages, and we may then both comprehend them clearly, and see the propriety of their being laid before us, even in this life, though not to be fully understood till the next.

* See Note (†) pag. 35.

† 2 Cor. viii. 9. Philip. ii. 5. Heb. ii. 9, 17. iv. 15. v. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 21.

terms upon which guilt was to be forgiven, and acceptance to be found *.

6. On account of the intercession † of the Messiah, the want of that perfect obedience mankind are originally obliged to, the defect of which made an expiation and intercession necessary, is forgiven, and thorough repentance for all our offences, and a candid reception and firm belief of the Christian religion, when proposed, and sincere endeavours to obey its laws and attain the perfection of its graces and virtues, accepted, and made the condition of pardon and everlasting happiness †. And the Christian graces and virtues are, Love, Reverence, Gratitude, and Obedience to God; Benevolence to men, Humility, Meekness, Purity, Sincerity, Mercy, Charity, Contempt of riches, honours, pleasures, and all earthly things, Heavenly-mindedness, Trust in the Divine providence and resignation to it, Chastity, Temperance, Submission to governors in all civil matters, Forgiving of injuries, Loving our enemies, Courage to stand up for the truth in spite of the applause or threatnings of men, Vigilance and attention to the concerns of futurity, Watchfulness against temptations from within, against the weakness of human nature, and the allurements of the world, Prudence without cunning, Zeal without heat or rancor, Steadiness without obstinacy, and so forth §: The practice of every one of which virtues, and the attainment of every one of which graces or dispositions is in itself, naturally, and abstracting from our Saviour's injunction, absolutely

* See Note (*) pag. 36.

† *Heb.* ii. 17, 18. iii. 1. iv. 15. v. 1—11. vii. 22—28. ix. 24. x. 21, 22.

‡ *Acts* ii. 38. iii. 19, 26. *Rom.* iii. 24—29. iv. 5, 16, 24, 25. v. 1, 2, 10. vi. 1—23. *Galat.* iii. 6—14. *Ephes.* ii. 5—10. *Philip.* iii. 9. *Heb.* x. 17—21. 1 *John* i. 7. ii. 2.

§ See Note (*) pag. 36.

necessary to qualify us for enjoying that happiness, to which the Christian religion is intended to raise those who embrace it.

7. Those, to whom Christianity is proposed, obliged, after a candid and sincere examination of its proofs, to receive it, and submit themselves to its laws*.

8. Two very simple but significant observances appointed by the Author of our religion, as outward tests of our profession, to wit, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. The first intended as a ceremony of initiation into his religion; and the second as a Memorial of Him, and of what he has done for us, particularly of his sufferings and death†.

9. The assurance of heavenly assistance to support the faithful, penitent, and obedient Christian in the performance of the duties of religion, and in the difficulties of the present state‡.

10. The future resurrection of all mankind from the dead, ascertained by the resurrection of Jesus Christ§.

11. The final retribution of everlasting happiness or unspeakable misery to every person according as they have lived agreeably to the divine laws or contrariwise||.

* *Matt.* viii. 21—28. x. 14, 15, 32, 33. xi. 6. xii. 40, 42. xiii. 19—23. xvi. 24—28. xxi. 33—44. xxii. 1—14. &c.

† *Matt.* xxvi. 26. xxviii. 19. *Luke* xxii. 17. *Acts* ii. 38. viii. 37. x. 47. *1 Cor.* xi. 23.

‡ *Rom.* viii. 9—16, 26. *1 Cor.* iii. 7, 16. vi. 19. xii. 8. *Theff.* v. 19.

§ See Note (*) pag. 35. *1 Cor.* vi. 14. xv. 12—22, 35—58. *2 Cor.* iv. 14. v. 1. xiii. 4. *Colos.* i. 18. iii. 1—4. *Theff.* iv. 13, 14, 16. v. 10. *Jam.* iii. 21, 22. iv. 13. *1 Pet.* i. 3. *Rev.* xx. 4—7. See also *Matt.* xxii. 29.

|| See Note (+) pag. 35. and *Rom.* ii. 5—11, 16. *1 Cor.* iv. 5. *2 Cor.* v. 10. *2 Theff.* i. 6—11. *1 Pet.* v. 4. *2 Pet.* iii. 10, 14. *Jude* 13. *Rev.* ii. 7, 10, 11, 17, 23, 26—28. iii. 5, 12, 21. vii. 15. xiv. 11. xx. 4, 12. xxi. 6. xxii. 7, 12, 14.

12. The future appearance of Jesus Christ, as Judge of the whole human race, to allot to every man his portion in the next life *.

I am sensible this view of the Christian scheme is rather proper for young people, who are arrived at some ripeness of judgment, than for such whose tender years render them unfit for reasoning or judging of abstracted subjects. But I am convinced any parent or instructor of youth, endued with a tolerable gift of communicating, might, with a little explaining here and there, cause any youth of about fifteen years of age to enter fully into all the parts of it. The advantages arising from explaining and enlarging on the passages of scripture above quoted, and from warmly recommending and insisting on the duties and dispositions above mentioned, are not to be conceived. Such methods frequently and diligently practised can hardly fail (through the blessing of God) to work the Christian graces and virtues into the very soul, and to mould and form the young and tender mind to that model of perfection.

Blessed work! Delightful task! Heavenly employment! Who would not rather desire to improve and ennoble a rational, immortal mind, which from the first laying of a foundation of virtue and religion in it, will be ever growing more and more perfect, advancing farther and farther in all that is truly great and worthy, and approaching more and more near to a resemblance of its Creator, than to build a tower or a city, which from the day it is finished, is every hour hastening to decay, and must at last be involved and lost in the general and universal ruin of this world and all things upon it? Who would not rather desire to have the pleasure to reflect on his death-bed, That he had had a considerable hand in directing one fellow-creature to the way that leads to happiness, and in prevailing on

* See Note (+) pag. 25.

him to enter upon it, and keep steddily to it, than, That he had for the sake of his own glory or that of his king, involved thousands in misery, strew'd the fields with carnage, and laid waste the fair face of God's creation?

To finish what I intend to say upon a Method of instructing youth in the knowledge of revealed religion, I will subjoin the following general view of the whole body of Revelation, which, if explained and enlarged upon properly, may serve to lead young people, come to the years of fifteen or upwards, to form worthy and sublime conceptions of it and of its divine Author, and excite their curiosity to attain a perfect and particular understanding of it.

Holy Scripture contains a brief, but uniform and consistent view (given at very distant ages of the world, by many different persons, inspired and conducted by a Spirit who saw clearly through futurity) of all the transactions of Almighty God, that were proper to be revealed to mankind, with regard to the rational inhabitants of this world during the whole period of its being inhabited (at least by our species) beginning with its first change from a Chaos to an habitable world *, and concluding with its being reduced again to a Chaos by fire †, giving some account either historically or prophetically of almost every thing great or important that has been or is to be transacted upon the vast theatre of the world, and opening a view beyond death and time into eternity, bringing to light the world of spirits, with clear, sublime, and rational notions of the perfections of God and his will, and the duty of mankind, and their means to gain happiness, and the only rational and consistent notions of futurity, that are any where to be found, and innumerable

* *Gen. i. 1.*

† *Rev. xx. 14.*

interesting truths, which no human sagacity could ever have found out, or so much as thought of, not only enlightening those countries on which its direct beams have shone with their full splendor, but even in spite of the clouds of Heathenism and superstition breaking through and affording a glimmering light to the most barbarous nations, without which they had been buried in total darkness and ignorance as to divine and spiritual things. The outlines of the immense and various prospect it exhibits, are these.

1. The reducing of this world from a Chaos to an habitable state *.

2. The creation of the first of mankind in a state of innocence and immortality †.

3. His fall from that state to one obnoxious to death by an act of disobedience ‡.

4. A dark prophecy of the restoration of him and his posterity to the favour of God and immortality (after death) by Jesus Christ §.

5. A flood sent to destroy all mankind for their excessive wickedness, except one virtuous family ||: a standing example to all ages, of the different consequences of obedience, and irregularity.

6. The term of man's life shortned on account of the bad use the antediluvians had made of its great length **.

7. Mankind degenerating into idolatry, scattered over the face of the earth, to prevent their setting up an universal idolatrous empire ††.

8. A particular family chosen for the singular piety of *Abraham* its head, to the one true God,

* *Gen.* i. 2—11.

† *Ibid.* 26. ii. 7.

‡

§ *Ibid.* iii. 6.

|| *Ibid.* vi. 5, 21—24.

** *Ibid.* vi. 3. xi. 10—27.

†† *Ibid.* xi. 1—10.

amidst the the universal idolatry and polytheism of all nations, and the descendants of it declared by prediction to be God's peculiar people, separated from the idolatrous nations to be a light to the rest of the world and to preserve his worship from being lost, and promises given, that from among them should arise the Restorer of Mankind. The descendants of Abraham by a peculiar providence carried into Egypt, to communicate something of the knowledge of the true God to the people of that country, and by the same means to other countries, Egypt being esteemed the mother of learning and arts, and having a great influence over the other nations. His numerous posterity after a certain time brought out of Egypt again, and with many miraculous interpositions of providence conducted through a vast wilderness, and at last established in a country assigned them. The antient Pagan inhabitants of that country driven out before them, as a token of God's displeasure with their idolatry and other crimes, as a warning to the Israelites to avoid what they saw bring on their ruin, and as a proof to all nations, that the victorious God of Israel was the true God, and the impotent gods of the nations only idols. The same people appointed to be examples to all nations of God's goodness to the obedient, and his severity against disobedience. If they continued attached to the worship of the true God, they were to be a repository of the true religion, and if they revolted from him, they were, as a punishment, to be scattered abroad into all countries, and their dispersion was to prove the spreading of the knowledge of the true God over the world. But, after all their disobedience and their punishments, they were to be restored at last, and to be raised to higher dignity than ever. All which peculiar honours bestowed on this people (the posterity of Abraham) were in-

tended for a standing proof, during a period of near 4000 years already, and how much longer God knows, of how much value in the sight of the supreme Being the singular piety and constancy of Abraham was, and that he thought he could not (so to speak) do favours enough even to the latest posterity of that eminently good man, who had greatly stood up alone for the worship of the true God against an idolatrous world; in which light also the saving of Noah and his family at the flood, and of Lot at the destruction of Sodom, are to be considered. A body of civil laws given to the Israelites by God himself, who places among them a visible glory, as a mark of his peculiar presence, and declares himself their King and Governor. A body of religious ceremonies, interwoven with their civil polity, appointed them for many wise and useful reasons, such as, 1. To typify the expiation that was afterwards to be made by Jesus Christ. 2. To be a yoke and punishment to the Jews for their frequent deviations into idolatry. 3. To keep them always in mind of their being under a theocracy, to which a set of religious observances enjoined by law was suitable. 4. For the sake of many noble morals couched under the outward ceremonies. 5. In compliance with those early and unimproved ages of the world, and the genius of that people, for whose gross apprehensions a religion perfectly internal and spiritual was not proper. 6. To keep them separate from the nations around them, as it has always been the outward ceremonials of religion that have made the distinctions; and for many other reasons too tedious to mention *.

9. The

* Gen. xii. 1—4. xiii. 14—18. xv. 1—19. xvii. 1—9. xxii. 15—19. xxvi. 5. Exod. iii. 6, 8, 15. vi. 3. xiii. 21,

9. The history of that people, partly related and partly foretold, during a period of above 3000 years, in which the various vicissitudes they underwent are shewn to be owing to the particular interposition of providence, and are all along the immediate consequence of their obedience or disobedience *; from which the greatest and most important Moral, that can be conceived, may be drawn, *viz.* That Obedience is the way to gain the favour of God, in which the happiness of all created beings consists, and that Disobedience is the sure way to provoke his displeasure, which implies in it the most perfect misery any nation or person can be reduced under.

10. A succession of inspired men raised up among them, to call them from time to time to their duty, and denounce against them the judgments which were to be the consequence of disobedience †.

11. Predictions given by the same prophets, of the revolutions of most of the great states and empires of the world ‡.

12. Dispersion of the Israelites, according to the threatnings of Heaven denounced by the prophets, for disobedience to their God and King §.

13. The coming of the Messiah, and his kingdom, more and more clearly held forth by predictions,

21, 22. xiv. 19—22. xvi. 32—36. xix. 4, 5, 6. xxiii. 23, 24, 32, 33. xxiv. 16, 17. xxix. 45, 46. xxxii. 8. *Numb.* xiv. 14, 15. *Deut.* i. 8, 30. ii. 25, 33. iii. 22. iv. 6, 7, &c. vii. 2, &c. xi. 23. xii. 1—4, &c. See also (for there would be no end of quoting particular passages) several of the Psalms, and the Prophets, St. Stephen's speech, *Acts* vii. the beginning of the Epist. to the Rom. and that of the Heb. and Lowman, of the Jewish Polity, Spencer, de legib. Jud. Patr. on the O. Test. Hammond, Ainsworth, Jos. Mede, Prideaux, Univerf. Hist. Law's Theory of relig. Stillingfleet's *Orig. sacræ*, &c.

* See *Exod. Josh. Judg. 1 Sam. 2 Sam. 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chron. 2 Chron. Ezra, Nehem. Esther*, and the Prophets.

† The Prophets *Sam. Isa. Jerem. &c.*

‡ *Ibid.* and *Rev.*

§ *Jerem.* xxxix.

from the first obscure one, "That the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent," given immediately after the fall, down through a period of four thousand years to those plain ones given by Zacharias the priest, Simeon, Anna, and by John the Baptist his immediate forerunner; and thus the will of God and his important designs with regard to mankind opened by degrees, every great prophecy carrying on the view to the last glorious ages, till at length our Saviour himself comes as a light into the world, and carries his views and discoveries immensely beyond all the past lawgivers, philosophers, and prophets, opening a prospect into eternity, and bringing life and immortality to light ||.

14. The history of our Saviour's birth, life, miracles, doctrines, prophecies, death, resurrection and ascension ††.

15. Records of the establishment of his religion, and the firm adherence of his followers in spite of persecution*.

16. Addresses from the first propagators of Christianity to their proselytes, explaining more fully the doctrines of religion, and encouraging them to constancy in it †.

17. The last charge of Jesus Christ, the head of the church, to the Overseers of the first societies of Christians, viz. the seven churches of the Lesser Asia, communicated in vision to John one of his Apostles †.

18. Predictions of the future state of the church from the apostolic age forward, particularly its degeneracy into popery, and a prospect of the consummation of all things §.

|| See note (*) pag. 37.

†† The gospels of *Matt. Mark, Luke, and John.*

* *Acts.*

† *Rom. to Rev.*

‡ *Rev. ii, iii.*

§ *Ibid. iv. et seq. to the end.*

It being obvious, that all young people ought to be taught to pray, there need be the less said on that head. They ought to be made to consider addressing the supreme Being as a duty necessarily incumbent on all finite rational ones, seeing they all depend absolutely upon Him. They ought to be taught to think of prayer as the most awful and serious duty of religion, and as an address to the greatest of Beings, in whose presence the very angels and archangels of heaven, compared with whom the kings of the earth are but worms, are said in scripture to veil their faces, and to prostrate themselves before him. They ought by no means to be suffered to use any words in prayer, which they do not understand, nor to say over constantly the same form by rote, which creates in them a contempt of that important exercise of religion, and makes it tedious and irksome to them; but should be furnished with variety of matter suitable to their age and understandings. And the prayers they use ought by no means to be of an immoderate length, a fault which the most pious people are apt to deviate into; though one would wonder how they come to do so, since there are in scripture so many express cautions against it, and since the pattern set by our Saviour himself is so remarkably short, and all the others in scripture are of a very moderate length.

They ought also to be properly prepared for partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and taught to consider it in its just light, *viz.* As a Memorial of the Author of our religion, especially of his death, as a public attestation of our being his disciples and followers, and as an evidence of our perfect love and benevolence for our fellow-Christians.

It may perhaps be expected that on this occasion something should be said on the subject of the female Education. But being unwilling to swell this

little Tract a great deal beyond the size I originally intended it, I shall say the less upon the head.

If the female part of our species are as truly rational and accountable creatures as the male sex, one would think, their being taught to speak French, to write, or rather to scrawl, to work with a needle, to come into a room genteelly, to dress neatly, to sing or touch a spinnet skillfully, and to dance gracefully, should hardly be looked upon as an education sufficient to qualify them for usefulness in their proper sphere in this world, and for happiness in the world to come. Nay, I should think it no difficult task to prove, That every one of the above accomplishments (as they are called) except that of writing, if it were done to the purpose, and handling their needle, may do them incomparably more prejudice than real service, if they are not constantly kept in mind, That they are all trifling and contemptible in themselves, serving only as ornaments or trappings, which may a little (and but a little) set off the less conspicuous but infinitely more valuable beauties of the mind, to wit, Good-nature, Prudence, Virtue, and Religion: and that, where these internal beauties are wanting, the outside ornaments of the person serve only to make the defect of real inward worth the more conspicuous. That young Ladies may in fact be with success instructed in principles of virtue and maxims of prudence, and that they may be made to form very clear and rational conceptions of the doctrines of the Christian religion, and to see the beauty of its precepts, is what I know to be practicable, because I have seen the happy effects of such pious and worthy labours of both parents and teachers: and I hope there are many instances of parents and teachers of young Ladies, who see their success in such methods, and resolve to continue them.

I have already observed, That it is of great consequence to the youth of both sexes, that they be
early

early led into a just and rational way of thinking of things, and taught to be extremely cautious of judging according to outward appearances, or the superficial opinion of the multitude. Thus, for example, young ladies ought to be informed, That (contrary to the vulgar error) it is a woman's *conduct* and *behaviour*, not her shape and complexion, that determine her character and value. That it is the part of a woman of prudence and discretion to bestow but very little thought on the ornaments of her body, and rather to endeavour after those accomplishments of the mind, which will hold out, and preserve the esteem of her friends and the affection of her husband after the fading charms of her person are gone. That the most exquisite beauty is odious, where the person who is possessed of it shews by her affected behaviour, that she is conscious of her own charms. That when a handsome young woman views herself in a glass, or hears her beauty commended, prudence should direct her, instead of being puffed up with pride and self-admiration, to reflect, that it is her business to take care that her mind be as well adorned with the Christian graces and virtues as her face is by the exquisite hand of Nature with a just mixture of the lily and the rose; to consider the superficial beauty she and others admire is every day drawing nearer to old age, wrinkles, and corruption; but that the beauties of her mind will still be improving to all eternity; to remember, that however amiable and delicate any human form may appear to the eye, there is nothing more mortifying than the consideration of the gross substances our bodies consist of, and the many nauseous and disagreeable properties of them; and that if beauty is really in any degree valuable, it ought to fill the person possessed of it with gratitude to Him, who bestowed it, and inspire her with the ambition of improving her mind suitably,

suitably, and so become an object the most completely amiable that the eye of man can behold, which I believe every one will own is, A woman whose person is adorned with unaffected beauty, and her mind with Good-nature, Prudence, Virtue, and Religion. That a nice taste in dress is a *blemish* instead of an *accomplishment*, because it is a mark of superior sense to *despise* all trifling matters, and to be anxious only about things of consequence. That a woman's having beauty enough to strike as many coxcombs dead at a glance as could be contained in both Vauxhall and Ranelagh, could be no real advantage to her: but the having her mind endued with such amiable qualifications as will gain and secure the affection and esteem of *one* man of sense for life, would be of the utmost consequence; and that the desire of gaining a multitude of admirers, or of making conquests, is the very madness of folly. That flattering a woman for her beauty, and pretending to gain her favour by that means, is more properly an *affront* than a compliment, because it supposes her so extremely weak, as to be taken with *flattery*, which is the very food of fools, and with the praises of what she does not owe to herself, but to nature, and with the praises too of the very meanest accomplishment a valuable woman is endued with, which is not worth commending in a person, who has any one other qualification to be taken notice of for. That the temptations and dangers, beauty exposes a woman to, are more than all the advantages accruing to her from it, can make up for; and that it requires an uncommon measure of prudence and caution in the person possessed of it, to prevent one bad effect or other from it.

Whenever a young lady arrives at the age of Twelve or Fourteen, it is high time to begin to instruct her how to conduct herself with regard to the

the other sex. I don't mean, To teach her how to set off her affected and artificial charms to the best advantage, and to practise a thousand studied arts and apish tricks to draw a set of superficial fops about her: it is both foolish and base in a woman to put herself off for any thing else than what every woman, and every man is, *viz.* A creature full of infirmity and weakness, and who must in many cases be forgiven and borne with. It is on this account, and by this means, that so many marriages are unfortunate, which had not been so, if the parties had been wise enough or honest enough to behave to one another like rational creatures before they came together.

It is therefore my opinion, that the youth of both sexes should be taught, That every thing in love-matters, except a rational, modest and cool inclination towards the most happy and perfect state known on earth, I mean, of marriage, on account of its various advantages and comforts beyond a single life, is contrary to the design of Heaven in creating the species in two sexes, and inconsistent with the nature and present state of mankind; and that all those loose images, or romantic notions we have in plays, novels, and poems, which serve either to inflame beastly desires, or at best to fill the imagination with raptures and extasies, which are altogether inconsistent with the calm dignity of a decent behaviour in the marriage state, are to the last degree pernicious and mischievous.

It is highly necessary that young women be early instructed both how to behave with regard to the honourable lover and the crafty seducer. With the first plainness and sincerity are all that is necessary, and with the latter distance and severity of behaviour; or, which is still the more sure way to be safe, downright flight: for the truest courage in temptation is shewn by running

ning away. They should be taught, That for a young woman to believe the flattering protestations of delighting men, is to venture her *all* against those, who have nothing to lose. They ought above all things to be every day and every hour cautioned against *Flattery*, which is always one principal art that is used in the undoing of every young woman, that is undone. They ought to be forwarned, that every man, who persists in a slavish attendance on a young woman, without making honourable proposals to her, has certainly either a design upon her virtue, or is a fool and incapable of any design at all. And they ought to be led to consider every man, who pretends to love and admire them, and is all the while endeavouring to seduce them, in the same light as a wolf, who (if he had the gift of speech) should earnestly beg the favour of a lamb to come within the reach of his claws: for that he greatly admired his beauty and plumpness, and wished to have the pleasure of devouring him.

But there is no end of the useful and important lessons of prudence that might be taught young ladies, nor of the advantages they might gain by them. They should likewise, as a powerful preservative against the inordinate love of gaiety and pleasure, be drawn, if possible, to a love of reading, I don't mean plays, romances, or love-poetry, which all tend to give their minds a wrong cast, and which they should be taught to despise for the false, bombastic, and unnatural conceits they are generally stuffed with: The reading that is most proper for them (abstracting from books on moral and divine subjects) is History, and Biography or the Lives of eminent men. Nor should they be suffered to be ignorant of Geography. What has been already said on instructing the youth of the other sex in the Christian religion may, with a very little variation be applicable on this head.

If, after what has been recommended to Parents and Instructors of youth for establishing those under their care in Morality and Christianity, any thing were to be added with a view of rendering the pains they have bestowed the more effectual, I should think the following might be likely to answer very important ends, and properly crown the whole work. That before a youth removes from under the eye of his Parent or Instructor, a Paper by way of letter be drawn up for his use by such parent or teacher, consisting of, 1. An abridgment of the Maxims and lessons of Prudence and Virtue that have been taught him. 2. A brief view of the Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity. 3. An abstract of the most forcible and convincing Arguments for the truth of Christianity. 4. Some warm and pathetic Exhortations to endeavour after a steady and universal conformity to the laws of the Christian religion. 5. Cautions against the dangers incident to youth from the prevalence of Deism *, from the snares of pleasure,

* The danger to be sure is not great, lest those profound philosophers the modern Deists should gain many proselytes, except among people of their own pitch of understanding. But youth, who have not had their belief of Christianity established in a convincing manner upon a thorough knowledge of its evidences, are liable to be drawn aside by the most wretched sophistry. They ought therefore to be forewarned and prepared for the cavils (poor and feeble as they are) of that unhappy set of men, who reason as a person might be expected to do, who was born with the wrong side of his brain upwards; and may be safely told, That the following are two or three of their most formidable arguments against the Christian religion. "That it can never signify much, whether mankind believe or reject the Christian faith, if their practice be right." Which is much about as good sense as to say, It is no great matter, whether the most effectual method that can be imagined, for compassing a design, be taken, so the design be compassed, or That it does not much signify, in raising a structure, whether a good foundation be laid or not, so the structure be raised. Again, "That the light of Reason is sufficient for mankind, and that Revelation is of no manner

1

" of

sure, honour, or riches, and from the infection of bad company. 6. Directions, in case of a fatal defection from virtue and religion, how to recover and return again to the way of truth; and cautions against the too common and destructive practice of putting off repentance till old age and a death-bed; and what other particulars may seem to the discretion of every Parent or Instructor of youth likely to be beneficial. This Letter, if I might advise, should be written with the hand of the parent, or person, who has had the care of the youth, and a promise desired of him, as a last and parting favour, That he would constantly, while he lived, continue to give it a fair reading a certain number of times every year; once a quarter, or the like. I am persuaded, that any thing written and given to a youth by a person, whom he formerly knew intimately, and was used to think of with esteem and love, must to the last day of his life have a more powerful effect in keeping him steady to his duty, or in calling him back to it, in case of a defection from it, than a much more elaborate composition of a person, who was a stranger to him, or who had

“ of use, and therefore ought to be rejected.” Which, setting aside its being found by experience, That the light of Reason and Revelation both are not too much, is to the same purpose as to say, The naked eye is sufficient to shew us, that there are planets in the sky, and therefore Telescopes are of no manner of use in astronomy, though they may shew us many surprising phenomena in each of them, that never were thought of before the invention of that noble instrument. “ That “ Morality is all, and therefore the rejection of a particular “ revelation can never be displeasing in the sight of God.” As if it was not as much an Immorality and as criminal in the sight of God to oppose, or even to neglect what comes with all the characters, internal and external, of a revelation from Him, as to injure one’s neighbour. “ That Christianity cannot be a “ revelation from God, else it had been communicated with “ equal advantage to all mankind.” Which is as good left-handed arguing, as to say, That Reason cannot be the gift of God, else it had been communicated with equal advantages to every Idiot as to Sir Isaac Newton.

written

written such a piece not immediately for his particular use. And, as to those parents, who may not have the proper leisure or abilities they can but apply for assistance to any judicious person either of the clergy or laity, of which it is to be hoped there are every where numbers, who would gladly be employed in such work.

Thus have I (my dear Countrymen) in the sincerity and honesty of a heart that desires no greater happiness than an opportunity of doing you service, laid before you a few incorrect and unpolished, but, I hope, not improper or unnecessary observations on a subject, which truly seems to me worthy, in this present age, of a much more sufficient hand. If what is here published should give the hint to such an one, to do complete justice to the subject, it will give me a peculiar pleasure. And if any person disposed to set the public right in any particular point I may have missed them in, will do it in the same spirit of candour as the above was written in, he is sure before-hand at least of *my* thanks.

Methinks to Parents there should be no great occasion for any pathetic intreaties, to move them to diligence in endeavouring to promote the happiness of their own offspring both here and hereafter; if the ties of natural affection do not engage them to their own flesh and blood, it is not any thing I can say, that will be of any influence with them. Nor indeed will any arguments be of weight with those Instructors of youth, whom the terrors of a day of account will not move to endeavour to acquit themselves faithfully. Some Parents there are, who, either from want of leisure, of a faculty of expressing themselves, and communicating what they know, or of a proper education, are not in a capacity to be very useful to their children in the ways I have been recommending: but (as is already
said)

said) we have reason to bless the Divine providence that there are not many places in Britain where any parent, who is desirous to have his children instructed in principles of Virtue and Religion, can be wholly at a loss for proper assistance. And, as it is not to be supposed, any person should take upon him the charge of instructing youth, who is not himself in some measure a judge both of most of the branches of human literature they ought to be instructed in, and likewise more especially of moral and divine matters, or, if there are, little do they think what a charge they undertake; if, I say, any such person neglects the instruction of those, who are under his care, in principles of Morality and Christianity, or commits it to any other who, for ought he knows, may neglect it too, he will, I am afraid, be found one day without excuse.

And now, having said what I thought would be proper on this occasion, to give me an opportunity of doing my best for your service and advantage; what remains, I mean the success of this weak attempt, must be left to the grace of God, and to your willingness to listen to well-meant advice.

F I N I S.